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pavement, or the attributes of some saint or martyr. Split very fine, it was used for the flesh and hair; and either a thick line of it was laid down to edge the subject finally, or it was used instead to sew down rows of fine twisted silk, many of which, laid together, formed a compact outline to the embroidered figure. One can conjecture only as to the original *color* of the faded and mysterious shades of some of the work of the Middle Ages; but one may decide, without error, that the *material* was *floss*. Likewise, in nearly every flower and ornament in mediæval embroidery, floss silk is the foundation of its brilliancy; and gold thread, i.e., "passing," its enriching and refining adjunct.

CHURCH NEEDLEWORK NOTES.

THE more ancient the needlework the more remarkable do we find it for beauty of effect gained by simple means. The designs exhibited on the oldest relics of embroidered vestments are of the plainest, although frequently of the most symbolic, character; and in their execution by the needle not a stitch has been used which, if drawn away, would not leave the pattern incomplete. One great feature of the Anglo-Saxon work was its lightness. The gold and silks were made to trace the pattern, as it were, on the surface of the main fabric of the article ornamented. It is easy to account, in some degree, for this peculiarity, when we reflect that in those early days such rich materials were costly beyond our conception now, and were doubtless economized and at the same time made the most of upon these sacred garments, the general decoration of which was held so essential. There is a growing taste for the revival of this graceful description of sacred embroidery.

The correct fringes for altar and other hangings are those made in spaces of different colors, any or all of which are included in the needlework as well as the ground of the cloth. Should one color in the fringe be chosen to predominate over the others, it should be that of the actual fabric forming the cover. The divisions with the principal colors may be from three to four inches wide. Where black is introduced it should occupy only about the space of an inch, and should be placed *between* the prevailing rich color and gold or gold silk. The fringe at the bottom of an altar-cloth may be of any depth; it is four inches ordinarily. The fringe for the superfrontal must be less deep than that of the frontal—where the latter measures four inches, the former should be three inches, but they must both be of the same make and order of coloring.

In churches where ample funds exist for decorations, the color of the altar apparel is varied according to the ecclesiastical season. Green is used on ordinary Sundays and service days; white on the festivals of our Lord, such as Christmas and Easter; red on the feasts of apostles and martyrs; and violet for the penitential times of Advent and Lent. Where the church belongs to a poor district, and the means are small in consequence, and the observation of the festivals is held essential by the minister, the antependium upon which the most should be bestowed is obviously the white. After this, the green should be considered, and should be chosen of a design that will admit of a crimson superfrontal, however simple, being hung upon it, to mark the feasts of apostles and martyrs. The violet frontal for penitential seasons may be the least elaborate of all. A simple monogram or cross, in white or gold color cloth appliqué, being very effective, practicable and inexpensive.

A large-eyed needle is a great preserver of the silk.

Too long a needleful of embroidery silk of any kind is

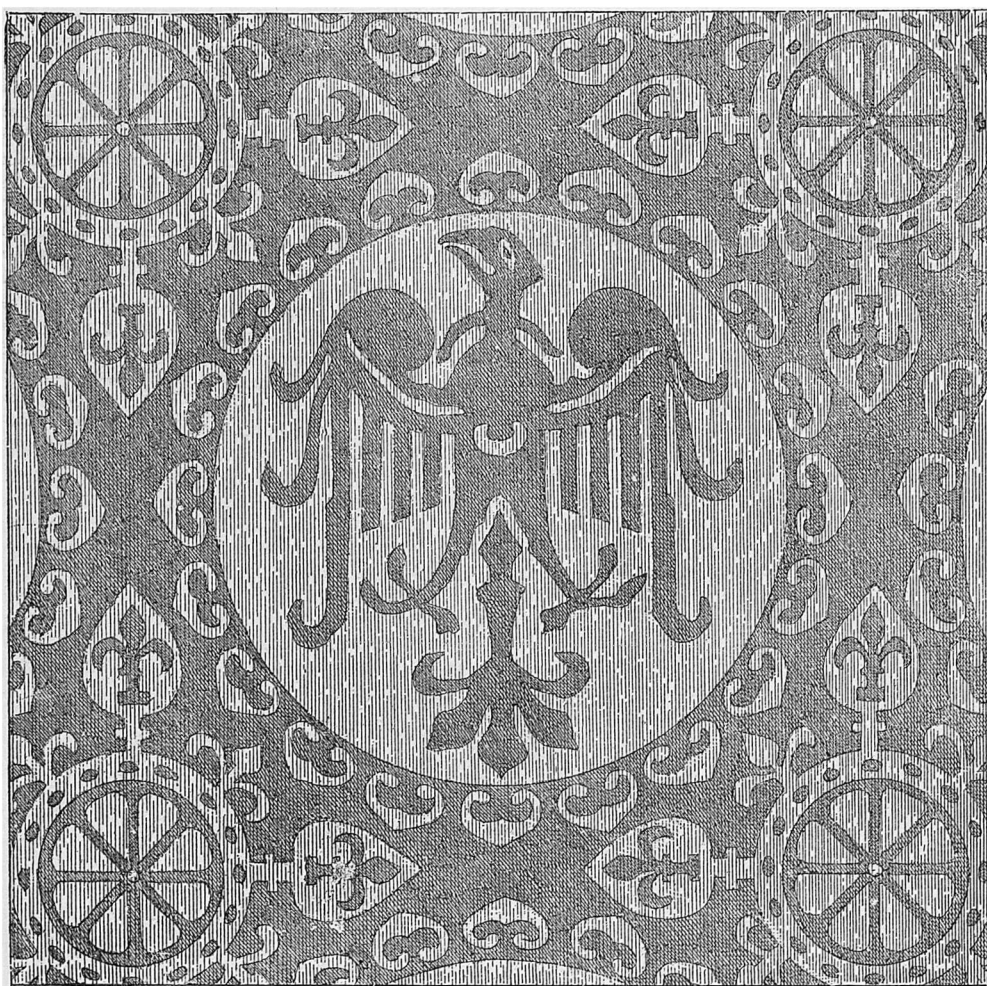
an error, but of twist silk especially. An accomplished worker will never thread her needle with a length exceeding twenty seven inches. By the time this is nearly worked up it will begin to show evidences of friction, and should be replaced. A longer length would suffer at the same juncture, therefore, there is nothing to be gained but a great deal wasted by employing it.

Our criterion for choosing a needle for embroidery is, that we may be able to thread it *instantaneously*, and to draw the silk backward and forward through the eye without the least friction or distress to the silk.

Pins are no insignificant item in the embroiderer's work-bag, for very little can be perfected without them.

The cardboard patterns for modern embroidery must, before sewing down, be laid in their right position by *pins*. The figures wrought in imitation of the ancient needlework are best arranged for transferring by *pins*. So with appliqué, every part of a design must be fixed accurately by *pins* preparatory to its being sewn down. For all these purposes only pins of the best make will properly serve.

The stiletto is an implement of great value to the



DETAIL OF THE GERMAN THIRTEENTH CENTURY DALMATIC. PAGE 46.

church embroiderer. Motives for its use are constantly being suggested in the progress of work of any importance. By the stiletto the stitches in modern embroidery are constantly regulated over the card. In appliqué, where edging cords are used, the stiletto is indispensable for passing them through the material; and in mediæval-work it may be in frequent request for puncturing holes which, in its absence, the scissors might be improperly made to do. Scissors have usually angular sides, and, accordingly, will, in piercing, *cut* the material—a great evil, which the rounded stiletto cannot well be capable of. A steel stiletto is the best. The ivory implement, so common for satin-stitch embroidery in cotton, is not suitable for *frame* work.

Sharp, strong *nail scissors* are the only kind necessary for every requirement. They should be selected as large in the bows as possible, to secure the thumb and finger from hurt in cutting out cardboard designs and textile materials for appliqué. The points, too, should close well together, for the purpose of cutting up bullion, and for cleanly nipping the pearl-purl in two.

Two thimbles are, of course, necessary for the worker who uses both hands. Plainly-made silver thimbles, with *smooth*, wide bands at top, are the best. A *new* thimble, in order to remove its roughness, should be

used for some time at coarse, indifferent work, before being brought into request for silk embroidery.

The piercer is the little instrument by which the gold embroiderer regulates the tubes of bullion over the yellow thread, guides the "pearl-purl" edging, and arranges and controls the "passing," while laying it down in different forms and patterns. The piercer is as essential to church embroidery as the scissors; indeed, it may be considered the factotum of the worker in gold.

NOTES ABOUT EMBROIDERY THREADS.

How art will stimulate manufacture is significantly shown in the perfection to which embroidery threads have been brought during the revived interest in embroidery. This is perhaps not so marked in silks as in flax and cotton, and more particularly in flax.

With linen threads the manufacturer had difficulties to contend with not only in the spinning, but in the dyeing. Flax does not take color as readily as cotton. The introduction of the new and imperatively demanded art dyes, which test even the capabilities of silk, has contributed to the difficulties to be overcome. How successfully this has been done, the linen threads now offered for embroidery are in evidence. So soft and fibreless are some of the brands of flax threads, and so lustrous as well, that they greatly resemble silk. I have seen what is known in the trade as

the "Flourishing Thread," a variety of flax floss which, worked on pongee, would to the sharpest eyes easily pass for silk. This brand comes from Johnstone, Scotland, and has a sort of historical connection with the very beginnings of Scotch thread. One hundred and sixty years ago, so the story runs, one Christian Shaw, daughter of John Shaw, laird of Bargarren, in Renfrewshire, of ancient family, having acquired a remarkable dexterity in spinning fine linen yarn, conceived the idea of manufacturing it into thread. So she began. She did almost everything with her own hands, and the slate on which she bleached her materials, placed in one of the windows, is now in possession of the proprietors of the "Flourishing Thread." After these humble beginnings the relations and neighbors of Christian came to her assistance, and thus grew the fine thread trade of the north of Scotland, hers being the first to cross the Tweed. The "Flourishing Thread," or flax floss, comes in forty-five colors, and it is claimed that they are fast. As a substitute for silk they may be used on silk, velvet, plush, or satin, and on all wash goods.

A word may be said here as to washing embroideries, which will apply to all kinds, whether of silk, flax, or cotton: make a warm lather of any good neutral or non-caustic soap. Wash the embroidery gently and quickly without rubbing. Rinse it in cold water in which a tablespoonful of table salt to a half gallon of water has been dissolved, squeeze it gently or roll it in a towel, but do not wring it. Then dry it quickly, but not in the sun. If needful, press it on the

back with a moderately hot iron. In ironing silk embroidery, place the piece inside of a thick cloth. Lustre can be restored to it by rubbing in one direction, when the piece is nearly dry, with a soft dry piece of flannel.

For flax floss, on the contrary, warm pressure is what is needed. Carefully rubbing with a moderately hot iron will restore its lustre of silk to the "Flourishing Thread."

A later novelty just brought out by Messrs. J. R. Leeson & Co., agents in this country of the Johnstone threads, is the Bargarren Art Thread, named after the energetic lady of Bargarren. By its rosy texture it is especially suitable for large pieces of work. It consists of two strands of floss loosely twisted, which when drawn into a design will present a smooth flat surface, and, on the other hand, may present a bold raised outline.

The Derwent Mills of Cockermouth, the birthplace of Wordsworth, has produced another famous floss—the Harris—taking its name from the mills of long proprietorship in that romantic region. This thread, of which William H. Horstman & Sons are the American agents, is the result of a series of long experiments to render flax a cheap and successful substitute for silk. This was again a question of dyes, and all the resources of science have been brought to bear to produce the success which has been attained. With the exception, perhaps, of the Indian blue and red, the colors are unimpeachable, and these two colors simply require care in washing to make them equally so. The Harris threads are applicable to all classes of embroidery, from the lightest tracery to the solid work used in decorative upholstery. The subject should not be left without adding that flax floss costs only about one third that of filoselle.

M. G. H.